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Their predatory excursions were observed by Sir John Clotworthy's regiment which had erected a fort at Toome. Immediately they built a boat of twenty tons burden, and furnished it with six brass guns. This was accompanied by seven smaller boats, and the whole flotilla was manned with three hundred men, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Connolly and Captain Longford. Thus prepared, these officers sailed over the lake, landed at the mouth of the Blackwater, raised and manned two small forts, and then returned. The Irish, however, contrived to pass the forts in dark nights, and plunder the country. Nay, they rapidly erected a fort at Clanbrassil, to protect their fleet in any sudden emergency. To counteract these measures, Connolly and Longford manned their little navy, and met the Irish flotilla near the shore of Clanbrassil. A naval battle ensued. The Irish were routed, driven on the shore, and there compelled to surrender. Sixty of them were slain, sixty more taken prisoners, and their fleet itself was captured, and brought by the victors in triumph to Antrim.\*

The family of O'Neill are of Gothic descent, having sprung from Belus, a Gothic king of the Orkneys. They came into Ireland in the latter part of the ninth century, and were then called Nial, O'Nial, or Hy Nial, which signifies a chief or prince. Having married into the family of some Irish prince, they soon became paramount chiefs of Ulster, and the most powerful opposers of the invaders of the country. In 1165 they defeated the Danes, and for several centuries they bravely opposed the ambitious encroachments of the English, with various success, and were never completely subjected to that power, until the latter part of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, at which period the celebrated Shane O'Nial flourished. This chieftain was a man of singular character. "Proud of his hereditary descent, and tenacious of his chieftaindom in Ulster, he not only deemed himself the genuine sovereign of the country, but vaunted that the Magennis, the Mac Guire, O'Reilly, O'Hanlon, O'Cahan, Mac Brien, O'Hagan, O'Quin, Mac Kenna, Mac Cartan, and all the Mac Donnells, whom he styled 'Gallowglasses,' were his subjects and vassals.—O'Nial was subtle in mind, alert in action, quick in expedient, haughty, vindictive, and unrelenting in disposition. He was munificent, social, and hospitable, but frequently intemperate at table, \* \* \* and, if his enemies may be credited, a persevering votary of Bacchus. His cellar is said to have usually contained at least two hundred tons of wine, of which, as well as of usquebaugh, he was in the habit of drinking to excess. When, by copious libations to the jolly god, he became intoxicated, his attendants placed him chin-deep in a pit, and then cast earth around him. In this clay bath he remained, inhumed as it were alive, until the velocity of his blood had abated, and his body had attained a cooler temperament.† O'Nial's tenantry or vassals were habituated to the use of arms. Six hundred soldiers constituted his body-guard; and he was master of an army of four thousand foot and one thousand horse. His father, Con O'Nial, had surrendered his territories to Henry VIII. and renounced the name of O'Nial. On this submission, he had been appointed Earl of Tyrone, with remainder over to his reputed son Matthew, who was then created Baron of Dungannon." Subsequently, however, Shane asserted his independence, and at the head of a considerable force burst into the English Pale, invading also the territories of the Irish chieftains. To check these proceedings, the Lord-Deputy Sussex marched against him; and as further reinforcements were expected by the Deputy, O'Nial was advised to make his submission to the Queen in person. This, after various delays, he consented to do, and proceeded to

London, where he appeared rather in the style of an independent prince, than of a vassal of the English crown. "The citizens of the British capital beheld with lively emotion the Ulster chieftain, accompanied by a splendid train of Irishmen, arrayed in the costume of their country, on whom they gazed with surprise, as on the natives of another hemisphere. A body guard of Gallowglasses, armed with battle-axes, marched with O'Nial. Long curled hair descended from their uncovered heads; their linen vests were dyed with crocus; long sleeves, short tunics, and shaggy cloaks, rendered the whole dress more singularly conspicuous. Regardless of the law which prohibited the use of the national Hibernian costume, O'Nial appeared at the head of his guards, as if he came in a genuine spirit of conscious independence, to treat on equal terms with the sovereign of the British empire, in her own capital. Having been greatly distinguished by royal favour, O'Nial returned triumphantly to Ireland, and for a short time acted with apparent zeal for the Queen, as he deemed himself her chosen champion."

Not far from the castle, in a small burying-ground, is the cemetery or vault of a branch of the O'Neill family. On a stone in the gable end, the following inscription is rudely engraved:—

This vault was  
built by Shane Mac  
Brien Mac Phelim Mac  
Shane Mac Brien Mac  
Phelim O'Neill, Esquire,  
in the year  
1722, for a burial-place  
to himself and family  
of Clanboy.

There is no other monument of the family in the demesne. A neat village once stood close to this, called also Shane's Castle, or more anciently Edenduff Carrick. It was removed by the late and present Lord, and the inhabitants accommodated with houses on other parts of the demesne;—not a vestige of it now remains.

#### PHELIM O'NEILL.

In th' historic pages of Erin's green Isle,  
How bright shines the name of old PHELIM the brave,  
Who lived where the groves of Shane's Castle now smile,  
And Neagh's crystal waters the green meadows lave.

His vassals a province—obey'd at command—  
In peace he was gentle—terrible in war;  
As a crest on his standard display'd the Red Hand,\*  
An ensign of glory!—Insult it who dare?

Where the green top of Slemish salutes the gay morn,  
To hunt with his vassals would PHELIM resort;  
And there oft at dawn has the loud sounding horn  
Invited the Chieftains of Ulster to sport.

The sons of Clanboy† often hasted along—  
The mighty O'Caghan‡ ne'er failed at the call;  
How great, how terrific appeared the throng  
Which oft issued forth from Shane's Castle's long hall!

The chase being o'er, on the green spreading plain,  
The hearty repast still profusely was laid,  
Whilst oft on the flowery banks of the Main,  
The loudly-ton'd bag-pipe enchantingly played.

With huge joints of meat were the chieftains regal'd—  
The stout aqua-vitæ in madders flow'd round—  
The wild-sounding drone of the bag-pipe ne'er failed  
To make every valley near Slemish resound.

In peace, or in warfare, or rude recreation;  
High, high in our annals old PHELIM arose:  
Whilst living—the glory and pride of a nation—  
In death—e'en his name long the dread of his foes.

Talk yet of old PHELIM—then mark the bright fire  
That darts from the eye of each son of the clan!  
All his mem'ry revere—as their king, as their sire,  
Their leader—a mighty, invincible man!

\* Stuart's Armagh, p. 374.

† "This singular practice of earth-bathing was imitated, about the year 1793, by one Graham, known in London by the name of the 'Celestial Doctor,' from a certain bed, styled 'the celestial bed,' in which he electrified barren married patients, to render them prolific. Afterwards he adopted O'Nial's earth-bath, as a powerful tonic and restorative; and on this subject he delivered various lectures to the credulous citizens of London."

\* The Red Hand is still the crest on the arms of the noble family of O'NEILL.

† Clanboy was the more immediately related connexion of PHELIM O'NEILL.

‡ O'Caghan, a celebrated Irish Chief.

Now dreary and dark is the lone habitation,  
 Where moulders the bones of old Ulster's great King !  
 Each heart feels a throbbing, a pensive sensation,  
 As his praises sound forth from the harp's loud-toned string.  
 Long, long shall his name be recorded in story—  
 A lambkin in peace, but a lion in war !  
 And O'NEILL still displays, as an emblem of glory,  
 The Red Hand of Erin !— Insult it who dare ?  
*Ballymena.* J. S. M. C.

## THE PIDGEON HOUSE.

A STORY OF THE LAST CENTURY.

The improvements made in the harbour of Dublin, within the last sixty years, (or thereabouts,) cannot fail to fill the beholder with admiration. Every way the eye turns the taste and spirit of our fellow-citizens are displayed—beauty is combined with utility. The feeble citizen of fourscore, as he saunters along the quay of the north or south wall, recalls to his memory, that in his boyhood those beautiful walks which he now enjoys were swampy impassible strands—that from Ballybough to Ball's Bridge, and from Mark's Church to Ringsend, were under the dominion of the waves of the Atlantic. Ringsend might then be deemed an island, for, before the Dodder River was enclosed by banks, the sea rolled over where rich pastures now relieve the eye in the vicinity of Irishtown; though it is to be regretted, that of all places round the harbour Ringsend is the least improved—it is, in fact, disgusting in its appearance, while some of its ruinous buildings seem to threaten destruction to the unwary passenger.

In this place there is, at present, living, an individual who has resided there nearly a century—who remembers the situation of the harbour upwards of seventy years ago—and who gives the following account of the origin of Ringsend and the Pidgeon House. Speaking on the subject some short time since, he observed—"I well remember the harbour of Dublin destitute of a light house, save one on Howth. Vessels of all burden were obliged to remain beyond the bar after nightfall, owing to the vast shoal shore lying north and south, called the north and south bulls. When they entered the harbour, the first place of security they met was Ringsend, so called from many score rings of a prodigious size fastened in beams of wood, protruding from this neck of land; other rings made fast in enormous rocks, brought for that purpose, the bottom being too soft for anchorage. Thus, from the end of land with rings, it was called in time Ringsend; its original name I leave to the antiquarian to discover. A wall was then begun by the Corporation of the city, where the Pidgeon House now stands, to make some shelter for the shipping; but this did not, in the least, remedy the danger. A wall farther out was considered indispensable; piles were sunk for the undertaking, and a wooden house, strongly cramped with iron, to serve as a watch-house, store-house, and place of refuge for any that might be forced there through stress of weather.

Large sums of money were collected from the citizens by the Corporation;—the work went on with spirit for about two years, when all on a sudden it stopped, and remained so for a long time, until the Ballast Office Company was established, who took it on themselves to finish it. To return to the building of the old wall, as it is now called: there were a number of boats plying from Ringsend to the pile-ends, where the new wall to the Light House commences, and which by many is called the Pile-ends to this day, and not without cause, for still the piles or stakes are to be seen. In those days, the Black Rock, or clean kitchen of Dunleary, was not heard of. During the time the works were going on, the word was, of a Sunday—"Where shall we go?" "To the Pile-ends, and take our dinner in Pidgeon's house;"—alluding to a man that lived in a large wooden house, as before described, at the Pile-ends. This man was left in care of the workmen's tools and works. He had one son, two daughters, and wife. Pidgeon finding the great resort to his house in the summer, spared no expense to make it neat for their reception;—had bottled ale, and several other kinds of drink, for public accommodation. He

next fitted out a boat, in a tasteful style, which himself and son rowed. He plied with none but the most respectable companies, of which he had a great resort.

From this man the Pidgeon House took its name, though some will have it that from a battery that was afterwards built of an hectangular form, with loop-holes, which, to all appearance, represented, at a distant view, a pidgeon house, such as we see in some of our farmyards, elevated on poles; while others affirm that from the carrier pigeons resting here it took its name; but all the old inhabitants of Dublin and Ringsend contend for the first.

It may be interesting to the reader to follow up the history of Pidgeon and his family.

For two summers Pidgeon was doing well, having a yearly salary for minding the works. One night, however, four men came under the window in a boat and pleaded distress—they got admission, but as soon as they regaled themselves, all started up, every man with a sabre in his hand, and seizing the old couple, tied them back to back. The young man (Ned Pidgeon) snatched a hand-spike, and courageously attacked them; but, unfortunately, one of the ruffians directed a deadly blow at his sister, which he prevented by seizing the sword, which the ruffian drew through his hand, and cut some arteries that disabled him for life. However, in this wounded state he fled to another hut, lately built, to call the assistance of two men who lived in it, but, in his short absence, the ruffians plundered the place of every valuable article they could lay hands on, and would have put the old couple to death were it not for the tears of the two girls. Ruffians as they were, they paid regard to their intreaties, and offered them no improper violence, save pulling off a ring from one of their fingers.

Ned Pidgeon returned with the two men, and was overjoyed to find all alive—and might have been in time to prevent the robbery was it not for the dressing that his hand required, which was done in a hasty manner. Finding the robbers gone, he ran out with the two men, who had each a brace of large pistols, and himself a smaller one, in order to make chase; but when they got down to the boats, they found them disabled, by means of boat-hooks driven, in many parts, through them, and they filled with water; so they were obliged to return. Pidgeon's boat, in particular, was stove to pieces.

The whole family now sat bewailing their losses, except, at intervals, the old man would raise his eyes to heaven, and thank Divine Providence for having preserved their lives.

This afflicting circumstance took place on a Saturday night. The next day some of the citizens, who used to resort to Pidgeon's, were alarmed as well as disappointed by not finding his boat as usual in waiting; however, they too soon were acquainted of the sad affair. Boats were hired at Ringsend, and soon a crowd assembled at the Pile-ends—every one sympathised in poor Pidgeon's distress. As the heart of an Irishman is ever open to feel for the misery of others, his eye swims with tears of joy as he opens his purse to relieve it. A collection was instantaneously set on foot, and as much as might serve his immediate wants presented him. Against the following Sunday he had another boat in readiness, when another sum was given him, which nearly made up his losses.

His poor son, Ned, was no more able to pull an oar; however, with one hand he kept the tiller. A few days after the outrage, as himself and his father were out some short distance catching fish for dinner, the old man's hooks fastened in something at the bottom, which, by a gentle pull of his line, seemed to yield to him. His first conjecture was, that it might be a piece of a thick rope, so he drew in the line with caution least he would break his hooks—but mark his terror when the face of a man appeared under the surface of the water. The moment Ned saw it, he exclaimed, with horror in his countenance, yet mingled with marks of exulting joy—"O, father, father, that's one of the villains who robbed us—O yes, yes, father, and the very wretch that disabled me."

Poor old Pidgeon looked as terrified at the body as